

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-09

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AID-05 /025 R

DRAFTED BY EA/TB:FJTATU:LRR

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EA/LC - MR. ROSENTHAL (DRAFT)

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P 112339Z AUG 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 190069

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, TH, LA

SUBJECT: ASSISTANCE FOR MEO REFUGEES IN THAILAND

1. WASHINGTON POST AUGUST 9 CARRIED BRUCE PAULING ARTICLE ON MEO REFUGEES IN THAILAND, WITH SUCH STATEMENTS AS "LIVING IN SQUALOR WITH LITTLE FOOD...30 VILLAGERS HAVE DIED IN THE PAST SIX WEEKS FROM HUNGER AND EXHAUSTION...80 PERSONS ARE SAID TO HAVE DIED OF DISEASES AGGRAVATED BY MALNUTRITION..." (ARTICLE BEING BRIEFED AUGUST 11 WIRELESS FILE, COMPLETE TEXT POUCHED). PAULING CITES "UNCONFIRMED REPORTS" CIRCULATING IN BANGKOK "THAT U.S. EMBASSY HAS BEEN PROVIDING ASSISTANCE...THE AID WAS SUPPOSEDLY ONLY FOR FOOD AND REPORTEDLY HAS STOPPED."

2. WE ARE AWARE OF THE THAI CONCERN THAT ASSISTANCE TO THE MEOS COULD REMOVE ANY CHANCE OF THEIR GOING BACK TO LAOS, COULD CREATE JEALOUSLY AMONG ETHNIC THAIS NOT RECEIVING SIMILAR AID, AND COULD CREATE PGNU SUSPICIONS. WE ARE ALSO AWARE OF CHATCHAI'S REPORTED COMMENT THAT THE USG "SPOILED" THE MEOS.

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3. ACCORDINGLY, WE CAN UNDERSTAND REPORTS REACHING HERE

THAT THE EMBASSY HAS DIRECTED THAT USG INVOLVEMENT IN THE
MEO RELIEF PROGRAM BE KEPT AS SMALL AND AS LOW-KEY AS

POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, PAULING'S ARTICLE HAS STIMULATED
INTEREST IN THE FATE OF THE MEO, AND WE ARE SURE TO
RECEIVE INQUIRIES. WE WOULD THUS APPRECIATE A STATEMENT
OF CURRENT EMBASSY POLICY WITH RESPECT TO USG INVOLVEMENT
IN THE MEO RELIEF PROGRAM TOGETHER WITH THE RATIONALE
BEHIND THIS POLICY. KISSINGER

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